

[0043] Here, a game program is a complete set of the commands and data for executing a game, such as the data relating to the effect images, commands or data specifying the “storyline”, and the like.

[0044] A server supplying the aforementioned game providing function and a server supplying the aforementioned gaming machine management function may also be provided separately.

[0045] (Composition of game Providing Server)

[0046] **FIG. 2** is a block diagram showing an example of the detailed composition of the game providing server 1.

[0047] In **FIG. 2**, the game providing server 1 comprises a CPU 10, a ROM 14, a RAM 16, a hard disk device 18, a communications interface circuit 22, a display monitor 24, an input device 26, and the like, which are mutually connected by means of an input/output bus 12.

[0048] The CPU 10 controls the various sections of the game providing server 1, in accordance with a program or the like stored in the ROM 14. The ROM 14 stores various programs to be executed by the CPU 10, fixed data, and the like, and the RAM 16 is used as a working memory, program memory, or the like, when the CPU 10 carries out processing. The ROM 14 or RAM 16 may of course be substituted by storage devices of other types, such as semiconductor memories.

[0049] The programs stored in the ROM 14 include: (1) a program 14a for providing a game program requested by a game selection-enabled gaming machine 2, to that game selection-enabled gaming machine 2; and (2) a program 14b for managing the game status, and the like, of the respective game selection-enabled gaming machines 2; and the like.

[0050] The hard disk device 18 is provided as a large-capacity storage device. Therefore, it may also be substituted with another storage device, such as an optical disk device. Desirably, it is a storage device which allows the stored game programs to be rewritten. The hard disk device 18 stores, for example, a plurality of types (here, 10 types) of game programs G1-G10 which can be provided to the game selection-enabled gaming machines 2 by the game providing server 1, together with the attribute information for each game (for example, the unit gaming fees which can be used in relation to that game). Furthermore, the hard disk device 18 stores management information for the respective game selection-enabled gaming machines 2, for example.

[0051] The communications interface circuit 22 has an interface function for communicating with the respective game selection-enabled gaming machines 2 via the network N. There are no particular restrictions on the communications protocol for performing communications between the game providing server 1 and the game selection-enabled gaming machine 2, but the communications interface circuit 22 performs interface processing in accordance with the communications protocol being employed. One communications interface circuit 22 may be interposed in the communications with all of the game selection-enabled gaming machines 2, or a plurality of communications interface circuits 22 may be provided. In the latter case, the game selection-enabled gaming machines 2 may be grouped on the basis of the installation area, or the like, and a communications interface circuit 22 may be associated with each

group of machines, or alternatively, a free communications interface circuit 22 may be assigned each time a new communication arises.

[0052] The input device 26 is a device at which an arcade manager, or the like, can make inputs to and control the game providing server 1, and the display monitor 24 displays current status data relating to the game providing server 1, requested data, operating guidance data, and the like, to the arcade manager, or the like. It is also possible to provide another output device, such as a printer, in addition to the display monitor 24.

[0053] For example, the display monitor 24 displays various types of data stored in the hard disk device 18 incorporated into the game providing server 1, such as the game status, the total number of coins inserted and paid out, the operating rate, and the like, of each game selection-enabled gaming machine 2 connected to the game providing server 1 via the network N. Furthermore, the input device 26 inputs a command for changing the type of data displayed on the display monitor 24.

[0054] The input device required in order to rewrite (or add to) the game programs stored in the hard disk device 18 may be different from the keyboard, and the like, at which the arcade manager, or the like, inputs instructions to the game providing server 1 (for example, it may be a CD-ROM access device).

[0055] (External Composition of Game Selection-Enabled Gaming Machine)

[0056] **FIG. 3** is an oblique diagram showing one example of a game selection-enabled gaming machine 2 according to a first embodiment.

[0057] In **FIG. 3**, the external structure of the game selection-enabled gaming machine 2 is constituted by a cabinet 30. A main display device 32 is provided on the central portion of the cabinet 30, and the upper portion of the front side of the main display device 32 tilts slightly rearwards with respect to the lower portion. The main display device 32 displays, for example, game information of the respective games of the game type selected by the player, and the respective games proceed on this main display device 32. Furthermore, the main display device 32 also displays a game type selection image (see **FIG. 14**), for example, during a period described further below. A touch panel 28 is provided on the surface of the main display device 32.

[0058] A first sub display device 34 is provided above the main display device 32. The first sub display device 34 displays information which cannot be displayed completely on the main display device 32, or a description of the rules of the game being executed on the main display device 32, or the like. In a single-game gaming machine, such as a conventional video poker gaming machine, or the like, a panel showing the name of the game and an illustration for creating an identifying force for the single-game gaming machine, or a written description of the rules of play, is attached in the section corresponding to the first sub display device 34, but in the first embodiment of the present invention, it is possible to execute a plurality of types of games on the same game selection-enabled gaming machine 2, and therefore the display contents of the first sub display device 34 are variable in accordance with the game being executed.